

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5721

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 3303

LIMDIS

FOR EA ONLY

ATTENTION EA/IMS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, SN, US

SUBJECT: USAF TEAM REPORT

REFS: (A) LETTER FROM WILLIAM SHEPARD TO DCM GRANT
DATED JUNE 28;
(B) SINGAPORE 1568; (C) STATE 075522;
(D) SINGAPORE 1450

APPRECIATE BEING PROVIDED WITH PROPOSED DOD PACKAGE ON USAF
"ADVISORS" FOR THE RSAF. ALTHOUGH WE RECOGNIZE THIS PACKAGE
IS STILL BEING CLEARED, WE WOULD LIKE TO FORWARD THE
FOLLOWING COMMENTS FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION. (WE RECOGNIZE
THAT EA HAS PROBABLY ALSO MADE MANY OF THESE POINTS IN ITS
CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH DOD AND PM ON THIS SUBJECT.)

(A) OUR BASIC PROBLEM WITH PROPOSED INSTRUCTION,
AIDE MEMOIRE AND ATTACHEMENTS IS THAT THEY USE THE TERM
"ADVISORS", AND INDICATE VERY PRECISELY THAT EACH ADVISOR
WILL HAVE AS HIS PRIMARY DUTY TO ADVISE A PARTICULAR
RSAF OFFICER RATHER THAN PROVIDE FUNCTIONAL TRAINING FOR
A PARTICULAR ELEMENT OR AREA OF THE RSAF. THE VERY CLEAR
IMPLICATION IS THAT EACH OFFICER WOULD BE COLOCATED NEXT
TO A PARTICULAR SENIOR OFFICER IN THE RSAF. AS INDICATED
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REFS (B) AND (C) IT WOULD BE MUCH WISER FOR POLITICAL

REASONS TO REFER TO USAF PERSONNEL AS A "TEMPORARY MANAGEMENT TRAINING TEAM" WHOSE FUNCTION WOULD BE TO ASSIST THE RSAF IN IMPROVING ITS COMMAND AND CONTROL CAPABILITIES. IF WE SET UP ADVISORY POSITIONS ALONG THE LINES INDICATED IN THE ATTACHMENT TO THE AIDE MEMOIRE, WE BELIEVE IT COULD EASILY GENERATE PRESS SPECULATION THAT THE U.S. WAS REALLY RUNNING THE RSAF AND HAD SET UP AN AIR FORCE MAAG IN SINGAPORE. WE THINK THIS COULD CAUSE US CONGRESSIONAL PROBLEMS AS WELL AS PROBLEMS WITH SINGAPORE'S NEIGHBORS, AND MIGHT POSSIBLY RUN AFOUL OF SOME OF THE RESTRICTIONS AND PROHIBITIONS IN THE NEW FOREIGN ASSISTANCE LEGISLATION WHICH WE UNDERSTAND ABOLISH MAAGS AND RESTRICT DAO ACTIVITIES AFTER SEPTEMBER 1977. (SINCE WE DO NOT HAVE THE FINAL TEXT OF THE RECENT LEGISLATION WE ARE NOT SURE JUST WHAT WOULD BE THE BEST WAY OF ASSIGNING USAF PERSONNEL TO SINGAPORE TO AVOID ANY PROHIBITIONS OR RESTRICTIONS CONTAINED IN THIS LEGISLATION.) BELIEVE USAF TEAM MEMBERS WOULD STILL BE ABLE TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY WITHOUT SITTING AT LEFT HAND OF SELECTED RSAF COMMAND AND STAFF PERSONNEL.

(B) UNLESS HANDLED VERY CAREFULLY PARA 3 OF THE PROPOSED INSTRUCTION RISKS POSSIBILITY OF OFFENDING THE BRITISH UPON WHOSE COOPERATION WE DEPEND WITH REFERENCE TO ACCESS TO BERTHS 6 AND 7 AT THE NAVAL BASIN AND NPW'S. AGAIN WE BELIEVE THE BASIC PROBLEM STEMS FROM THE CONCEPT THAT USAF PERSONNEL WOULD BE ASSIGNED TO "ADVISE" PARTICULAR RSAF OFFICERS RATHER THAN TRAIN RSAF ELEMENTS IN PARTICULAR COMMAND AND CONTROL FUNCTIONS. WE BELIEVE GOS WOULD ALSO WISH TO HANDLE PHASING IN OF USAF PERSONNEL IN A WAY WHICH WOULD AVOID GIVING OFFENSE TO BRITISH, AND WOULD TAKE THE NECESSARY ACTION TO PHASE OUT COMMONWEALTH PERSONNEL BEFORE OUR PERSONNEL WERE IN PLACE. WE COULD MAKE IT A CONDITION THAT OUR ASSISTANCE IS DESIGNED TO MAKE THE RSAF SELF-SUFFICIENT AND THAT OUR PERSONNEL COULD ONLY TRAIN SINGAPOREAS -- WHICH IS WHAT THEY THEMSELVES WANT.

(C) EMBASSY MADE RECOMMENDATION IN REF (C) THAT NUMBER OF USAF PERSONNEL BE KEPT TO A MINIMUM (PREFERABLY NO MORE THAN THREE) FOR REASONS OUTLINED PARAS 3-6 REF (D). IF USAF INSISTS THAT IT CAN NOT DO THE JOB WITHOUT ASSIGNING FIVE
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TRAINERS, I WILL RELUCTANTLY ACCEPT THIS NUMBER, BUT ONLY ON THE THEORY THAT IF THIS MISSION IS TO BE PERFORMED AT ALL IT SHOULD BE PERFORMED WELL. HOWEVER, IT MUST BE FULLY UNDERSTOOD BY BOTH GOS AND DOD THAT NUMBER WILL NOT INCREASE, THAT THE USAF ACCEPTS THE CONCEPT OF A TRAINING TEAM AS OPPOSED TO INDIVIDUAL ADVISORS TO SENIOR RSAF OFFICIALS AS OUTLINED IN PARA A ABOVE, AND THAT THEY LEAVE PROMPTLY WITHOUT REPLACEMENT UPON THE COMPLETION

OF THEIR TRAINING ASSIGNMENT.
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